

Assembly Majority Leader Dario Frommer

43rd Assembly District, including the areas of Glendale, Burbank and Los Angeles.

2005 Legislative Accomplishments

December 2005

2005 was a tumultuous year for the California Legislature, as we faced a much more partisan Governor, as well as a costly special election that served only to distract legislators and constituents away from the pressing issues facing the state. Despite the distractions, several key pieces of my policy agenda were signed into law, including a bill to alleviate the financial burdens of California's military families, legislation to improve rail safety and a bill to significantly increase transparency in hospital charges. However, Governor Schwarzenegger missed several opportunities to save taxpayer dollars and to protect children's education and health. He vetoed bills that would have provided health insurance for all children in California, as well as bills to fund higher education and lower the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs.

Assembly Majority Leader hosts rail safety hearing after Glendale Metrolink crash

Assembly Majority Leader Dario Frommer joined victims and victims' families of recent Glendale Metrolink derailment, law enforcement representatives and state and federal agencies to discuss the issue of passenger rail safety in California, specifically focusing on Metrolink's practice of using "push-pull configurations" for trains.

Frommer Bill to Improve Rail Safety by increasing penalties signed into law

As Chairman of the new Assembly Special Committee on Passenger Rail Safety, Assembly Majority Leader Frommer's bill AB 1067 increases penalties for drivers who violate rail crossing laws.

The bill makes it a crime for any person to

"California has one of the worst records of rail safety, and our initial investigations have revealed evidence that state and deferral agencies have been asleep at the switch. This committee will look at how we can prevent tragic losses and damages suffered during the Glendale MetroLink crash."

-Assembly Majority Leader Dario Frommer -

After a Metrolink train derailed in Glendale during January, killing 11 and injuring 200, Frommer requested that Speaker Fabian Núñez to create a new Assembly Special Committee on Passenger Rail Safety. Frommer was appointed by the Speaker as chair of this new committee.

obstruct a railroad and cause damage, derailment or injuries to passengers. In addition violators could be fined up to \$2,500, nearly double the existing penalty.

Financial Struggles Eased for Military Families

The *California Military Families Financial Relief Act of 2005*, legislation by Assembly Majority Leader Dario Frommer to alleviate the financial hardships often faced by families of National Guard and Reserves who are called into active service, was signed into law by the Governor.

Assembly Bill 1666 provides financial relief to the families of and members of the Reserves or National Guard whose active duty lasts for a period of at least 30 consecutive days, by waiving certain fees, allowing for a tuition credit at certain colleges when a service member is deployed midterm and prohibiting residential heating, electricity, water, trash and sewer service stoppages for the families of full-time active duty service members.

Frommer leads fight for health of California's children

Children's health advocates accused Governor Schwarzenegger of breaking a key campaign promise to provide health care coverage to all children after he vetoed AB 772 (Assembly Majority Leader Dario Frommer) and AB 1199 (Assemblywoman Wilma Chan).

"Governor Schwarzenegger has broken another promise he made to the people of this state, this time, a promise to make the health of our children his priority," Frommer said. "In a state as big and as prosperous as California, the one thing we should be able to agree on is that every child deserves to see a doctor when they're sick."

Assembly bill 772 would have created the California Healthy Kids Program, which would streamline existing programs and provide health insurance options to insure all other uninsured children.

Assembly bill 1199 would have created the California Healthy Kids Fund, which would have accepted public and private donations and sought matching funds from the federal government to help fund the health coverage for children

FROMMER WORKS TO CURB HEALTH CARE COSTS

Legislation requiring transparency in hospital charges signed

Californians will soon be able to go online and compare prices for hospitalization costs and receive an estimate of hospital charges in advance under a new law created by Frommer and signed by the Governor.

This bill requires that hospitals provide information on whole procedures rather than itemized lists of different costs, information that will eventually be available on the Web Site of the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development. In addition, it gives a patient the right to receive an estimate of the patient's expected cost of hospital care upon admittance.

Governor vetoes two bills to lower cost of prescription drugs

Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed Assembly Bill 76 by Frommer would have allowed California to consolidate purchasing for state programs and to negotiate for lower drug prices by buying in bulk. The concept was endorsed both by Governor Schwarzenegger's California Performance Review and the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's office.

Additional legislation by Frommer that would have provided much-needed relief to millions of desperate California consumers and taxpayers struggling to afford the skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs was also vetoed by the Governor. Assembly Bill 73 would have provided information on a state Web site to consumers about international pharmacies that meet state standards for safety and accessibility that sell prescription drugs for 40% to 75% less.

Governor Schwarzenegger ignores chance to fund higher education without raising taxes

Assembly Bill 593, sponsored by California State Treasurer Phil Angelides, would have created the California Hope Endowment for higher education. The endowment, governed by a public board, would have solicited public and private monies, as well as matching dollars. To help fund the trust, AB 593 would have created Cal Hope Trust, a public trust corporation that would have managed a portion of the real estate owned by the state government like a business, earning returns from it. The bill was expected to eventually bring in \$300 million for higher education.

What \$300 million could pay for:

***Full fee scholarships for 385,000 community college students**

***Full fees and costs for 19,000 CSU students**

***Doubling current outreach programs**